

## Article - Education

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§15–106.1.

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) (i) “Foster care recipient” means an individual who:

1. Was placed in an out-of-home placement by the Department of Human Services; and

2. A. Resided in an out-of-home placement on the individual’s 18th birthday or at the time the individual graduated from high school or successfully completed a GED; or

B. Resided in an out-of-home placement on or after the individual’s 13th birthday for at least 1 year and was placed into guardianship, adopted, or reunited with at least one of the individual’s parents.

(ii) “Foster care recipient” includes a younger sibling of an individual described in subparagraph (i) of this paragraph if the younger sibling is concurrently placed into guardianship or adopted out of an out-of-home placement by the same guardianship or adoptive family.

(3) “Out-of-home placement” has the meaning stated in § 5–501 of the Family Law Article.

(4) (i) “Tuition” means the charges imposed by a public institution of higher education for enrollment at the institution.

(ii) “Tuition” includes charges for registration and all fees for credit-bearing and noncredit courses required as a condition of enrollment.

(5) “Unaccompanied homeless youth” means a child or youth who:

(i) Has had a consistent presence in the State for at least 1 year before enrollment in a public institution of higher education that is documented by school, employment, or other records;

(ii) Is not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian;

(iii) Is a homeless child or youth, as defined by the McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act; and

(iv) Was determined to be a homeless child or youth by:

1. A Maryland local school system homeless liaison, as defined by the McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act;

2. A Director or a designee of the Director of a Maryland–based program funded under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act;

3. A Director or a designee of the Director of a Maryland–based program funded under Title IV, Subtitle B of the McKinney–Vento Homeless Assistance Act; or

4. The financial aid director at the public institution of higher education in which the youth seeks to enroll.

(6) “Vocational certificate” means a certificate or license awarded by a public institution of higher education on completion of a course of study that prepares an individual to work in a career field by taking credit–bearing courses or noncredit courses.

(b) When determining whether a youth is an unaccompanied homeless youth, a financial aid administrator shall verify annually that the youth qualifies as an independent student under the federal College Cost Reduction and Access Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1087vv(d)(1)(H).

(c) (1) A foster care recipient or an unaccompanied homeless youth is exempt from paying any tuition at a public institution of higher education, regardless of that foster care recipient’s or unaccompanied homeless youth’s receipt of any scholarship or grant if:

(i) The foster care recipient or unaccompanied homeless youth is enrolled at the institution on or before the date that the foster care recipient or unaccompanied homeless youth reaches the age of 25 years;

(ii) The foster care recipient or unaccompanied homeless youth is enrolled as a candidate for a vocational certificate, an associate’s degree, or a bachelor’s degree; and

(iii) The foster care recipient or unaccompanied homeless youth has filed for federal and State financial aid.

(2) If a foster care recipient or an unaccompanied homeless youth receives a scholarship or grant for postsecondary study and is enrolled before the recipient's 25th birthday as a candidate for a vocational certificate, an associate's degree, or bachelor's degree at a public institution of higher education, the scholarship or grant may not be applied to the tuition for the foster care recipient or unaccompanied homeless youth.

(3) A foster care recipient or an unaccompanied homeless youth who is exempt from tuition under this section continues to be exempt until the earlier of:

(i) 10 years after first enrolling as a candidate for an associate's degree or a bachelor's degree at a public institution of higher education in the State; or

(ii) The date that the foster care recipient or unaccompanied homeless youth is awarded a bachelor's degree.

(d) (1) On or before June 1 of each year, each public institution of higher education in the State shall report to the Commission on the aggregate and disaggregate number of foster care recipients and unaccompanied homeless youth who:

(i) Received a tuition exemption under this section during the prior academic year;

(ii) Received a tuition exemption under this section at any point during their enrollment at the institution; and

(iii) Earned a bachelor's degree, an associate's degree, or a vocational certificate from the institution during the prior academic year.

(2) On or before September 1 of each year, the Commission shall:

(i) Compile the reports received in accordance with paragraph (1) of this subsection; and

(ii) Submit the compilation of reports to the General Assembly in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article.

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